REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 11 and 19 have been amended. Claims 11-21 are pending and under consideration.

The sole issue remaining in the outstanding Office Action is an obviousness rejection of claims 11-21 under 35 USC §103(a) based on US Patent 5,719,921 to Vysotsky et al. in view of US Patent No. 6,374,219 to Jiang.

Applicants previously argued that Vysotsky et al. does not disclose a plurality of speech output modules, as required by the claims. During a teleconference with Examiner Opsasnick conducted after the Office Action was issued, the Examiner kindly provided guidance to the undersigned regarding how he is interpreting the claimed speech output modules to read on Vysotsky et al. Based on the conversation, it is understood that the Examiner is reading the claimed speech output modules on the data processing that is performed in Vysotsky et al.

Independent claim 11 has been amended to recite:

> 11. A speech processing system comprising:
> a plurality of modules of respectively different types, said plurality of modules comprising a plurality of speech recognition and a plurality of speech output modules for respectively different types of speech output, each speech output module being capable of outputting oral speech; and
> a selector supplied with an input signal containing information identifying a type needed to process said input signal, said type relating to type of speech recognition and said type of speech output needed to process said input signal, said selector being connected to said plurality of modules and routing said input signal to one of said modules while excluding said input signal from another of said modules, the selector routing said signal based on the type identified in said input signal for processing said input signal only in said one of said modules to which said input signal is routed.

Clearly, the data processing that is performed in Vysotsky et al. does not output oral speech.

Further, independent claim 19 has been amended to recite:

> 19. (Currently Amended) A speech processing method comprising:
> providing a plurality of modules of respectively different types including speech recognition modules for respectively different types of speech recognition and speech output modules for respectively different types of speech output;
> analyzing an input signal to be processed to identify a type of speech recognition and a type of speech output needed to ~~process said input signal; and~~ communicate with a user;
> selecting one of the speech recognition modules and one of the speech output modules according to the analysis of the input signal;

routing said input signal to one of said modules according to the analysis of the input signal ~~having the type needed to process said input signal, and processing said input signal only in said module to which said input signal is routed~~;

recognizing speech from the user using only the selected speech recognition module; and

outputting speech to the user using only the selected speech output module such that two-way oral communication is performed with the user using the selected speech recognition module and the selected speech output module.

According to independent claim 19, an input signal is analyzed to select one of the speech recognition modules and one of the speech output modules. Speech is output to the user using only the selected speech output module such that two-way oral communication is performed with the user using the selected speech recognition module and the selected speech output module. Clearly, Vysotsky et al. does not disclose the limitations of independent claim 19.

The Examiner admits that there are deficiencies in the Vysotsky reference. The Examiner cites Jiang for these deficiencies.

Jiang is based on a continuation-in-part application filed on February 20, 1998. If the information cited by the Examiner is not found in the parent application, which issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,076,056, then Jiang is only entitled to the February 20, 1998 date. Further, even if Jiang is entitled to the date of the parent application, the present application has a priority date of September 3, 1996. The earliest possible priority date of Jiang is September 19, 1997. Accordingly, Jiang is after the present invention, not before the present invention.

In addition to not being prior art, the Examiner states that Jiang discloses a selector that selects between continuous speech and isolated speech recognition lexicon. Applicants question whether this type of switching is applicable to the primary reference, Vysotsky et al.

Because Vysotsky et al. does not disclose or suggest the claimed speech output modules and because Jiang is not available to cure the admitted defects in Vysotsky et al., it is submitted that the obviousness rejection should be withdrawn.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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